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8 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
9 **SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

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11 CLAUDIO RANGEL-MORGADO,
12
13 vs. Petitioner,
14 UNITED STATES,
15 Respondent.

12CR04250-LAB
CASE NO. 12-CV-3076-LAB
**ORDER DENYING 28 U.S.C. §
2255 HABEAS PETITION**

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17 Rangel-Morgado is currently serving a 27-month sentence for a violation of 8 U.S.C.
18 § 1326. *See United States v. Rangel-Morgalo*, 12-CR-4250-LAB. Now before the Court is
19 his habeas petition brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2255, through which he seeks a
20 sentence reduction. He seeks the reduction on the ground that, due to his alien status, he
21 is ineligible for early release into a halfway house (and other penal benefits) in violation of
22 his Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment rights to due process and equal protection. This is a
23 familiar claim that aliens make in federal habeas petitions, using (or guided by) what appears
24 to be a form pleading, and the Court has consistently rejected it.

25 To state an equal protection claim, a plaintiff must allege he was treated differently
26 from other similarly situated persons, *see City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Ctr.*, 473 U.S.
27 432, 439 (1985), and deportable aliens are not "similarly situated" to United States citizens.
28 It is not an equal protection violation to allow United States citizen-inmates, who must re-

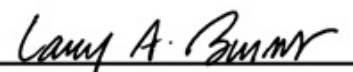
1 enter domestic society, to participate in rehabilitative or other programs while denying that
2 privilege to deportable inmates. See, e.g., *Santos v. United States*, 940 F.Supp. 275, 281
3 (D. Hawaii 1996) (one's status as deportable alien, which may result in ineligibility for less
4 restrictive terms of confinement, cannot justify downward departure; plaintiff failed to state
5 an equal protection claim "because deportable aliens are not 'similarly situated' to United
6 States citizens"). The Supreme Court "has firmly and repeatedly endorsed the proposition
7 that Congress may make rules as to aliens that would be unacceptable if applied to citizens."
8 *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 521-22 (2003).

9 This Court has previously rejected the claim that an alien's ineligibility for various
10 prisoner programs or benefits violates that person's rights. See *Rendon-Inzunza v. United*
11 *States*, 2010 WL 3076271 (S.D. Cal. 2010); *Lizarraga-Lopez v. United States*, 89 F.Supp.2d
12 1166 (S.D. Cal. 2000). Those holdings stand. The purpose of halfway houses is to
13 facilitate the reintegration of prisoners into the community, but prisoners in Rangel-
14 Morgado's position are released first to the Attorney General and then to a foreign
15 community. Moreover, halfway houses are still custodial institutions wherein prisoners serve
16 out their full sentences, and from which deportable aliens would be a unique flight risk.

17 No due process or equal protection issue arises merely because a defendant's alien
18 status excludes him from certain programs available to citizens, within the prison system or
19 without. Accordingly, Rangel-Morgado's argument that the Court should consider his
20 request for an additional downward departure on that basis is rejected. His habeas petition
21 is accordingly **DENIED**. The Court also **DENIES** him a certificate of appealability. See 28
22 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2).

23
24 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

25 DATED: January 12, 2013

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27 **HONORABLE LARRY ALAN BURNS**
28 United States District Judge